

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BERLIN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE GROUPS AGREE TO FORM
"BUNTE LISTE", BUT CAN'T QUITE PULL IT OFF

REF: USBER 1568

SUMMARY: THE MAJORITY OF BERLIN'S CITIZENS' INITIATIVE (CI) GROUPS HAVE DECIDED TO FORM A "BUNTE LISTE", WHICH HOPES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MARCH 1979 BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION. THE DECISION TO RUN CITY-WIDE WAS CONFIRMED AT A MEETING AT BERLIN'S TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ON JULY 24. A TECHNICALITY IN THE BERLIN ELECTORAL LAW, HOWEVER, HAS KEPT BERLIN'S "BUNTEN" FROM ESTABLISHING AN ORGANIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS; IT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE BUNTEN WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THIS OBSTACLE.

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ALTHOUGH MORE THAN 60 INDIVIDUAL CI GROUPS AND SEVERAL SCORE OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS ATTENDED OR WERE REPRESENTED AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT A NUMBER OF CI GROUPINGS ARE MAINTAINING THEIR DISTANCE FROM THE EFFORT TO ORGANIZE A BUNTE LISTE, EITHER OUT OF POLITICAL CONVICTIONS, OR BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS ABOVE THE DISTRICT (BEZIRK)

LEVEL. MOST OBSERVERS OF THE JULY 24 MEETING AGREE THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT BERLIN'S K-GROUPS HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN SEEKING TO GET A HANDLE ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVERS OF THE "BUNTE LISTE". THIS MAY IN TURN CAUSE A NUMBER OF MORE MODERATE CI GROUPS TO AVOID ASSOCIATION WITH THE "BUNTE LISTE" AND COULD FIRGHTEN OFF MANY MODERATE VOTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF ABOUT 60 CITIZENS' INITIATIVE GROUPS WHICH ARE DETERMINED TO OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE TO BERLIN'S ESTABLISHED POLITICALPARTIES MET AT BERLIN'S TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY JULY 24 IN AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A CITY-WIDE ORGANIZATION WHICH COULD CONTEST SEATS IN BERLIN'S HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION NEXT MARCH. ALMOST ALL OF THE REPRESENTED GROUPS ARE NEIGHBORHOOD (DISTRICT AND SUB-DISTRICT) BASED, BUT SHARE A COMMON DESIRE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THOSE ISSUES COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH CITIZENS' INITIATIVE MOVEMENTS THROUGH-OUT GERMANY; ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OPPOSITION TO POWER PLANTS (ATOMIC OR COAL), QUALITY OF LIFE, ALTERNATIVE LIVING FORMS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS, AND THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN THREATENED TO BE OVERWHELMED BY A SEEMINGLY INSENSITIVE AND UNCONTROLLABLE BUREAUCRACY.

2. FOLLOWING A LENGTHY DISCUSSION, A GENERAL CONSENSUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS REACHED AT THE MEETING ON A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS OUTLINING THE GENERAL BASIS FOR A BERLIN "BUNTE LISTE." THESE PROPOSALS RANGED FROM THE ACTUAL COMPOSITION OF THE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ORGANIZATION TO THE PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION WITHIN THE GROUP:

A) THE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE "ORGANIZATION" (BUNTE LISTE) SHOULD REMAIN ABOVE POLITICAL PARTIES (UEBER-PARTEILICHKEIT).

B) TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES OR AN PSEUDO-PARTIES OF "GRUENE AKTION ZUKUNFT" (GAZ) TYPE SHOULD BE DECISIVELY REJECTED.

C) THE "BUNTE LISTE" SHOULD HAVE A MIXED OR "MOTLEY" FORM, TO BE COMPRISED OF INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND CITIZENS GROUPS, IDENTIFYING WITH THE GOALS OF THE "LIST."

D) THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ON THE CANDIDATE LISTS SHOULD BE PROPORTIONAL TO THEIR SHARE OF THE BERLIN POPULATION (I.E. AT LEAST 53 PERCENT).

E) COOPERATION OF LEFTIST GROUPS, INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS, IS TO BE WELCOMED, PROVIDED THESE GROUPS DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN "PARTY POLITICS."

3. IN THE COURSE OF THE JULY 24 DISCUSSION AN ELECTION COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO BERLIN'S VARIOUS ORGANIZED INTEREST GROUPS INCLUDING TRADE UNIONS, ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND WOMENS' GROUPS IF THE BUNTE LISTE WAS TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF CLEARING THE 5 PERCENT VOTE BARRIER CITY-WIDE.

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4. THE GENERAL OPPOSITION BY MOST PARTICIPANTS AT THE TU MEETING TO THE FORMATION OF A "POLITICAL PARTY" AS SUCH MAY PROVE CRUCIAL FOR THE FORMATION OF A CITY-WIDE BUNTE LISTE. BUNTE LISTE ORGANIZERS, AS CAN BE SEEN FROM THE LIST OF PRINCIPLES IN PARA 2 ABOVE, PREFER TO ATTEMPT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL MIXED BAG OF INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS WITH CERTAIN GOALS IN COMMON. BERLIN'S ELECTORAL LAW, HOWEVER, ONLY PERMITS INDIVIDUALS OR POLITICAL PARTIES (AS DEFINED BY THE GERMAN POLITICAL PARTY LAW--PARTEIENGESETZ), BUT NOT OTHER TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS, TO RUN FOR SEATS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES "ORGANIZATIONS" WHICH ARE NOT

FORMALLY CONSTITUTED AS "POLITICAL PARTIES" UNDER GERMAN LAW MAY RUN FOR SEATS FOR DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES, HOWEVER; SEVERAL CI GROUPS, INCLUDING THE SUCCESSFUL WAEHLERGEMEINSCHAFT UNABHAENGIGE BUEGER IN ZEHLENDORF, INTEND TO CAMPAIGN ONLY AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL. AS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSEQUENCE, THE FORMAL FOUNDING OF A BERLIN-WIDE CITIZENS' INITIATIVE BACKED BUNTE LISTE DID NOT TAKE PLACE JULY 24, BUT HAD TO BE POSTPONED YET ONCE MORE, WHILE ORGANIZERS PONDER THE NEXT STEP TO TAKE.

5. MOST OF THE CI'S PRESENT AT THE JULY 24 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING WERE LEGITIMATE LOCAL CITIZENS' INTEREST GROUPS. IT WAS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT MEMBERS OF SEVERAL K-GROUPS AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SELF-PROCLAIMED TROTSKYITES PLAYED AN ACTIVE PART IN THE MEETING. MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF BERLIN K-GROUPS SEEM TO HAVE HAD A HAND IN DRAFTING THE PRINCIPLES OUTLINED IN PARA 2 ABOVE. COMMENTATORS GENERALLY AGREE THAT THE DECISION BY THE ORGANIZERS OF THE BUNTE LISTE NOT TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS IS A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE STRONG INFLUENCE OF K-GROUP MEMBERS AND SYMPATHIZERS. IN ADDITION TO THE K-GROUP MEMBERS AND TROTSKYITES IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING, USBER REP WHO ATTENDED NOTED THAT SEVERAL SPEAKERS IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS MEMBERS OF THE BERLIN TEACHERS' UNION (GEW) WHICH WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE BERLIN DGB LAST YEAR BECAUSE OF HEAVY INFILTRATION BY MEMBERS OF THE WEST GERMAN BACKED SEW. IT WOULD BE INCORRECT TO EQUATE THE PRESENCE OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF GEW MEMBERS IN THE BUNTE LISTE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING WITH SEW ACTIVISM IN THE BUNTE LISTE; IT IS SAFE TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE GEW MEMBERS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE IMPRESSION THAT BERLIN'S BUNTEN ARE MORE "RED" THAN ANY OTHER HUE.

6. COMMENT: WHETHER BERLIN'S "BUNTEN" CAN ULTIMATELY COME UP WITH A PLAN OF ACTION REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IT IS ALSO UNCERTAIN WHETHER THEY WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE HURDLE POSED BY BERLIN'S ELECTORAL LAW. AS NOTED, MOST CI MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED THE BUNTE LISTE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING INDICATED A GENERAL DISINCLINATION TO FORM A POLITICAL "PARTY." UNLESS THEY DO SO, OR UNLESS

THE PROVISIONS OF BERLIN'S ELECTORAL LAW CAN BE CHALLENGED SUCCESSFULLY IN THE COURTS PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS, THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE BUNTEN HAVING A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ELECTION DIMINISHES CONSIDERABLY. IF THE BUNTEN FAIL TO FIELD AN ORGANIZATION OR PARTY FOR THE HOUSE ELECTIONS, THE BENEFICIARY WOULD BE THE FDP, THE PARTY CONSIDERED BY OBSERVERS TO BE MOST THREATENED BY POLITICAL DEFECTIONS TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL PARTY. THE FAILURE OF THE BUNTEN OR ANY OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PARTY TO ENTER THE HOUSE ELECTION WOULD NOT BY ANY STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION MEAN THAT THE FDP WOULD BE OUT OF THE WOODS AS FAR AS NEXT MARCH IS CONCERNED. NEWLY SELECTED FDP SENATOR FOR JUSTICE GERHARD MEYER POINTED OUT TO MISOFF THIS WEEK, FOR EXAMPLE THAT THE FDP FALL BELOW 5 PERCENT IN HAMBURG LESS AS A RESULT OF FDP DEFECTIONS TO THE "GREENS" AND "BUNTEN" THAN BECAUSE OF LARGE DEFECTIONS BY DISSATISFIED VOTERS TO THE SPD AND CDU. THESE DEFECTIONS MAY HAVE HAD AS MUCH OR MORE TO DO WITH GENERAL VOTER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE FDP LOCALLY AND NATIONWIDE THAN ANY OTHER FACTOR ACCORDING TO MEYER. BASED ON WHAT WE HAVE OBSERVED HERE, MANY OF THE CONDITIONS WHICH MEYER DESCRIBED IN HAMBURG APPEAR TO APPLY IN BERLIN AS FAR AS THE FDP IS CONCERNED. NELSON

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